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ABSTRACT

A three-stage model for the systematic development of competent secondary school teachers of speech communication begins with the prospective teachers examining "who they are" and "what makes them confident and happy" in terms of motivational needs, and dominance-submission, anxiety-confidence, and rigidity-flexibility characteristics. The second stage centers on the prospective teacher identifying and understanding how a teacher is expected to function in many professional roles. The third stage stresses that whoever the person and whatever his or her role configuration, there are teaching skills to be developed for effective functioning as a teacher. The speech education and communications education programs at Kent State University have implemented changes in their program by following the model. First the students' personal needs and wants, hopes and fears, and strengths and weaknesses are assessed by student self-reports and the observations of instructors. Next, an awareness of educator role expectations begins by having the student spend 150 clock hours of practical exposure to real school settings and problems. In the refinement of teaching skills, the student gets another 150 hours of field and simulated practice plus 300 hours of full-time student teaching. Following the practice teaching in two speech methods classes, the student completes the full-time 10-week practicum in a secondary school speech program. This constitutes a culmination of the progression of practical practice from self-awareness to role observations, to micropractice of specific skills, to macropractice of overall competencies in speech and drama teaching. (HOD)

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Practical Practice in Communication Teaching

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Abstract

This paper outlines a three stage model for the systematic development of competent secondary school teachers of speech communication. The model is applied to the Kent State program with a focus on the simulated and real teaching experiences in the two major methods courses.

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Kent State University Speech Communication Pedagogy Center

Practical Practice in Communication Teaching

Jerry D. Feezel

Competency based education has become a prominent concern in the field of education. The center of that concern is how to define and assess competencies which must be attained by teachers, rather than simply assuming that the process of "taking courses" will result in competence.[1] States seem to be increasing attempts to structure teacher education to develop specified competencies which can be addressed. Over ten years ago, before the competency movement gained much strength, William Clark Trow pointed out that the effectiveness of an instructor is dependent upon his/her functioning with regard to personality, role, and skill factors.[2]

This trichotomy with the interplay between the three factors, may be elaborated into a three stage model for the systematic development of competent teachers. In view of this, the purpose of this paper is to (1) expand Trow's trichotomy into a general model for instructional development and (2) exemplify how the model may be applied in practical simulated and real experiences for the teacher candidate.

The Persona

In developing and applying the model then, the first

step for a prospective teacher is to examine "who you are" and "what makes you confident and happy," especially in terms of four dimensions of personality characteristics which Trow emphasized.

Motivational needs (e.g., for security, attention, friendship, love, and power)

Dominance-Submission (your relative degree of tending to be dominant or submissive with others)

Anxiety-Confidence (How self-confident or anxious are you?)

Rigidity-Flexibility (Do you expect everything to follow a precise plan or can you "roll with the punches"?)

Becoming aware of one's needs and relative degrees of power, confidence, tolerance, and other traits is a major beginning point. Alfred Gorman has stressed that behavior in instructional groups is affected by the individual members' personalities, attitudes, expectations, and perceptions of status; and the teacher is a very important "special member" of the classroom group.[3]

The preparation for teaching should begin with "the persona"--a self-assessment of relating to other people. A personal inventory, via questions such as the following, is one way to begin.

How tolerant are you of ambiguity?

How accepting are you of differences in others?

Must you feel liked by everyone to be happy?

How do you react when your ideas are challenged?

These questions are merely examples tapping four typical areas of personal stresses or conflicts in teaching situations. Personality measures, tests of values, cognitive style inventories, and other formal instruments may also be helpful. One such Personal Needs Inventory appears in a book by Gray and Gerrard[4] and includes 42 statements about self (e.g., I find life stimulating and challenging, People value me for my competence, I feel nervous in large groups, I am bored, etc). One responds by rating the frequency of each statement as experienced currently and then the level or frequency needed to be at least minimally self-satisfied. Other specific self-assessment profiles or forms appear in Gray and Gerrard and many interpersonal communication texts. Although such formalized materials can be useful in revealing one's persona, a note of caution should be sounded.

This does <u>not</u> mean there is an "ideal" personality profile for teachers to which one must conform. Rather knowing oneself with regard to these and other dimensions of personality serves as a starting point for gauging how one will uniquely function in the expected teacher roles with what specific teaching skills. In many cases colleges of education and teacher education programs have used standardized tests of teacher personality to screen applicants (e.g., the Minnesota Multi-phasic Personality Inventory). However useful these are for self-diagnosis by the teacher education student, they open the door to setting standards of conformity which may create likeminded populations of teachers. Such

tests were never really designed to be used as right-wrong, good-bad teacher personalities. Instead, the student should be encouraged to first learn his/her personality traits, needs, values, frailties, etc. and then examine the clashes and harmonies of such traits in specific, typical educational situations. Supervision, guidance and counsel can be given in such a process, but the focus should be more on self-assessment and individual personality understanding as it relates to the roles and skill demands of teaching.

The Roles

The second developmental stage of the model centers on the student identifying and understanding how a teacher is expected to function in many professional roles, defined by the school system and the position. For general purposes, one may identify 13 major professional roles grouped according to career, management and teaching categories.

Career Roles:	Profession member
	Faculty member
	Community liaison
	Learner or Scholar
Manager Roles:	Monitor (Discipline or control)
	Evaluator and record-keeper
	Learning-aids officer
	Program director
Instruction Roles:	Motivator-reinforcer
	Planner/Adapter
	Resource person (informs and explains)

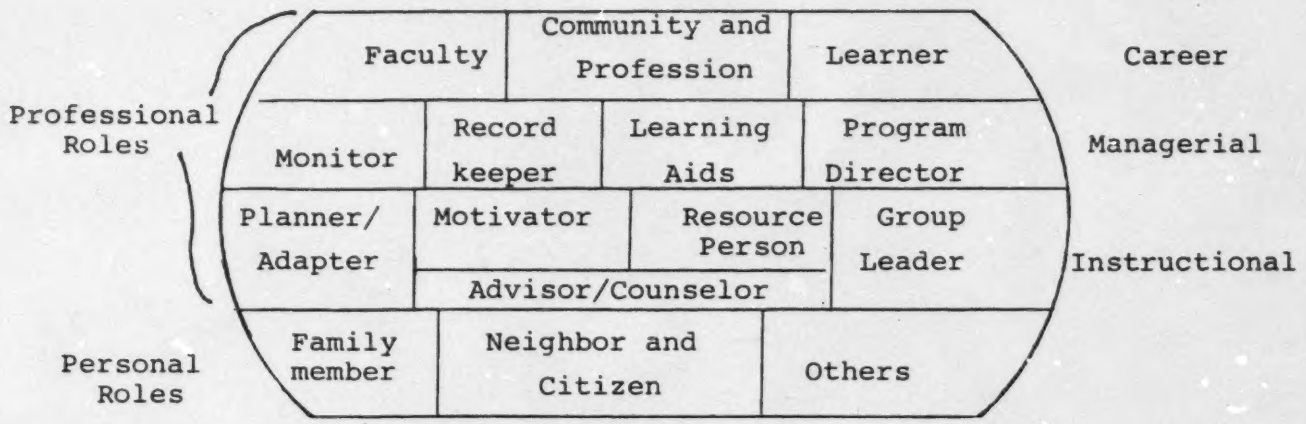
Discussion leader

Counselor/Advisor

This represents a redefinition and synthesis of Trow's listing of teacher roles with Amidon and Hunter's teaching activities.[5]

Naturally the importance or prominence of any one role will vary with the position description or role expectations. A department chairman will function with major responsibilities in the Administrative roles (especially Program Director). A school psychologist will operate primarily as Measurer and Motivator. But even for classroom teachers, the weighting of roles changes by the levels and settings of instruction. Some of the tribulations of a teacher intern ("practice teacher") relate to the large Learner role, the weak Faculty member role, and restriction in the Program director and Planner/Adapter roles. High school teachers may find Disciplinarian and Motivator-reinforcer to be requisite roles, while college instructors may find those two roles less prominent but the Faculty member role to be larger.

Nevertheless, any educator could be viewed as a composite of many professional roles, as well as personal (non-teaching) roles, such as those discussed above. When a person can keep the various role demands in balance, they fit together into a holistic pattern of the effective educator, like the following:



Of course, these roles will vary in magnitude or valence according to the nature of the person and the demands of the position, as discussed above. Therefore, a person as would-be teacher could examine what priority rank may be assigned to each role by the needs of one's personal and professional life. Alternatively, each role could be weighted for the percentage of time needed to carry out one's responsibilities. Once students have identified their personal needs and the many roles expected of an educator, they are ready to begin the skill refinement stage--which in interaction with the other two factors, occupies the longest span of their education.

The Skills or Competencies

The third stage of the model stresses that whoever the person and whatever his or her role configuration, there are teaching skills to be developed for effective functioning as a teacher. The component of teaching skills would have to be detailed as specific to the content field being taught. Therefore, this component may differ in substance from major to

major. Although the skills which a teacher of speech communication must master are many, a review of recent developments in the field suggests, to the author, six general competencies which are especially important to roles required of teachers in the 80's and beyond. (professional role references follow each competency).

1. Teachers should be prepared to deal with communication in both informal and formal learning settings, and among all parties to the educational process: educators, parents, youth, administrators, citizens, and legislators. (Extraclass roles and all others)
2. Teachers should be prepared to work with other staff members in the interpersonal aspects of communication in all learning, all subjects. (Faculty member)
3. Teachers should be prepared to comprehend and critically analyze quantitative-empirical research as well as historical-critical research. (Learner)
4. Teachers should be prepared to make humane interpersonal uses of the latest developments in electronic communication technology. (Learning-aids officer)
5. Teachers should be prepared to employ a variety of flexible, yet accountable and evaluatable, student-centered strategies for facilitating learning. (Instructional roles generally)
6. Teachers should be prepared to apply analysis tools and systems to the dynamic process of classroom verbal and nonverbal transaction. (Instructional)

An SCA/ATA task force has developed a detailed set of "competency models" for preparation of K-12 teachers[6] which is more detailed than the summary list of general competencies above. In other words, for each of these six basic competencies, there are whole bodies of theory and recommended practices for which teachers must develop skills in application to specific roles according to personal styles.

For example, it is possible to examine some major skills identified in two research studies of teacher evaluation as related to presona and roles. The first study reports how 264 grade K-12 teachers and administrators in Delaware rated 16 general teaching skills as criteria they would use to judge teacher effectiveness. The top eight skills, ranked by mean ratings on a nine-point scale, were as follows:

TEACHING COMPETENCIES	MEAN RATING
1. Relationship with class (good rapport)	8.31
2. Willingness to be flexible, to be direct or indirect as situation demands	8.17
3. Effectiveness in controlling class	7.88
4. Capacity to perceive the world from the student's point of view	7.79
5. Personal adjustment and character	7.71
6. Influence on student's behavior	7.65
7. Knowledge of subject matter and related areas	7.64
8. Ability to personalize teaching	7.63

It is interesting to note that certain personal characteristics (or elements of the persona) are prevalent in the top

eight criteria--i.e., flexibility, empathy, adjustment and character. Also note that the teachers role as "disciplinarian" ranked high while the skills relating to citizen, professional, and learner roles were ranked among the lowest seven of the 15 skills (not shown here).

The second study examined some rather specific teacher competencies which can be compared to the roles developed in this paper. The research involved a random sample of teachers and student teachers in four states (California, Missouri, North Carolina, and Texas) who rated the importance of 27 skills in judging teaching effectiveness. The top 20 of these 27 (which had mean ratings of 4.0 or above on the 5-point scale) are ranked below, with categorization (in parentheses) by the roles structured earlier in this paper.[8]

1. Develop learners who are self-motivated and capable of taking a major responsibility for directing their own learning. (Motivator)
2. Arouse student interest in subject material. (Motivator)
3. Promote positive student attitudes toward school and education. (Motivator)
4. Diagnose individual learning difficulties. (Evaluator)
5. Organize material to promote student learning. (Planner)
6. Create awareness of and respect for fellow students. (Monitor)
7. Organize classroom to promote student learning. (Planner)
8. Control disruptive situations effectively. (Monitor)

9. Self-diagnose the instructional effectiveness of a lesson. (Evaluator)
10. Make the classroom an enjoyable place to spend time. (Motivator)
11. Communicate facts and information to students. (Resource)
12. Help students develop their creativity. (Resource)
13. Be perceived by students as warm and concerned. (General persona)
14. Construct valid teacher-made tests to assess student learning. (Evaluator)
15. Use a variety of instructional aids in class activity. (Learning-aids)
16. Cooperate with fellow teachers. (Faculty Member)
17. Cooperate with school administrative staff. (Faculty Member)
18. Aid in the social adjustment of students. (Counselor)
19. Plan remediation activities. (Planner)
20. Communicate general facts and information to parents. (Liaison officer)

Notice that a variety of the roles are covered by these high-ranking criteria, but Motivator, Planner, Evaluator, Monitor, and Resource Person lead the rest. Based upon such research recommendations the three-stage model can be applied for the systematic development of competency in each prospective teacher.

Practical Applications of Persona, Roles and Skills

The new Ohio certification standards, implemented in 1981,

mandate increased assessment of competencies for teaching and at least 300 clock hours of clinical and field teaching experiences prior to student teaching. Thus earlier and more extensive simulated and real teaching practice is one of several major changes in teacher education throughout Ohio. At Kent State University, the speech education and communications education programs have implemented such changes following the three-stage model outlined above.

In the first stage, the student's personal needs and wants, hopes and fears, strengths and weaknesses are assessed by student self-reports and the observations of instructors. Several measures are used during the first two years to focus on the "persona." Self-report profiles and scales are used in the core professional education classes to increase student self-awareness. An interview is conducted with the speech advisor about the student's background in co-curricular speech and drama activities and goals are set for filling any gaps here. This is a very pragmatic aspect of the job expectations in high school programs and any student who does not have practical experience in the "after-school" activities will be ill-prepared for teaching speech. This interview also enables counselling students as to practical teaching minors to select and any other limitations they may feel or show.

Personal factors and capabilities are also assessed by instructors during the first two years on forms which are separate from the course grading norms. The students are also required to self-evaluate their backgrounds, motives, needs, and

goals on a three-page questionnaire before being admitted to advanced standing (i.e., junior year). Within the optional speech courses, students may take Interpersonal Communication, which also provides extensive opportunity to self-examine. Intrapersonal awareness is a major component of this sophomore course and a prime goal is to become sensitive to ones personal needs and problems in relating to other persons.

The second stage, awareness of educator role expectations also begins in these first two years of college by having the student spend 150 clock hours of practical exposure to real school settings and problems. During the several core education courses students are presented a range of models, roles, and styles of teaching through extensive observation. The observations are both direct (visits to a wide range of school settings) and indirect through filmed examples and class simulations or roleplaying. The major purpose of this stage is to give prospective teachers a realistic picture of school settings to compare with their individual needs and capabilities to assume educator roles.

In the third stage, refinement of teaching skills or competencies, the student gets another 150 hours of field and simulated practice plus 300 hours of fulltime student teaching. Now the focus shifts from directed observation to actually trying out teaching skills. The two speech teaching methods courses are central to this stage.

The first, dealing with planning and conducting curricular speech and drama, begins with a personal reassessment of the

individual student. This is an extension from the earlier generic education self-assessments to the particular needs of high school speech teaching. Also, the various roles of teaching are reviewed in relation to the specific demands of speech and drama positions in secondary schools. However, the most important element of the methods course is the integrated practice within two real teaching settings. Methods students observe and assist in teaching a freshman level college speech fundamentals course (taught by the methods instructor). This includes at least three hours of class per week for six weeks to analyze and work with young people fresh out of high school. Other methods class sessions during each week are spent discussing events of the fundamentals class and practical techniques for this and other actual high school courses. The "assistant" teachers practice skills of interaction analysis, supervising small group activities, presenting short bits of instruction, critiqueing student speakers, plus fully planning and teaching an entire lesson.

Simultaneous with the practice in the college fundamentals class, methods students are assigned to observe and assist a certified secondary speech teacher two or more days a week. Here, the practice teachers try out ideas from the methods class and other skills within an actual high school curricular setting. The two different levels and settings give methods students varied practical experiences which have been well-rated by them over the four years that this program has been used.

The second speech methods course deals with co-curricular

forensics, drama and radio-TV activities. Here too the prospective teachers get extensive practice experiences by simulated coaching in class and direct observations of programs out in the schools. High school and college students come to class for demonstrations of events. Usually the methods students attend and judge at two or more area forensics tournaments as well as watching high school theatre and radio-TV programs. In addition, they assist with planning and running a one evening on-campus college or high school speech tournament. Through these many experiences a wide variety of teaching competencies are developed. The emphasis in the co-curricular course is on practical problem solving in the roles of coach, tutor, critic, organizer, director, etc.

Following the practice teaching in these two speech methods classes, the student completes the fulltime 10 week practicum in a secondary school speech program. This constitutes a culmination of the progression of practical practice from self-awareness to role observations, to micro-practice of specific skills, to macro-practice of overall competencies in speech and drama teaching. It seems likely, even from just a few years experience, that the systematic application of the three stage model with the integrated practice experiences will result in highly competent speech teachers prepared to face the realities of today's secondary school.

Footnotes

[1]See, for example, James H. Block, "The C in CBE," Educational Researcher, 7:5 (May 1978), pp. 13-16; Hayden R. Smith and Thomas S. Nagel, "From Traditional to Competency-Based Teacher Education--And Never Back Again," and Michael A. Lorber, "Molding CBTE to the Satisfaction of Students and Faculty," Phi Delta Kappan, 61:3 (November, 1979), pp. 194-196.

[2]"Role Functions of the Teacher in the Instructional Group," in Dimensions of Oral Communication Instruction: Readings in Speech Education, edited by Keith Erickson (Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown, 1970), p. 85.

[3]Teachers and Learners: The Interactive Process of Education, 2nd ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1974), see especially pp. 37-39.

[4]William A. Gray, III and Brian A. Gerrard, Learning By Doing: Developing Teaching Skills (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1977), pp. 121-125.

[5]Trow, pp. 85-91; Edmund Amidon and Elizabeth Hunter, Improving Teaching: The Analysis of Classroom Verbal Interaction (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), pp. 4-7.

[6]"Preparation of Elementary and Secondary Teachers in Speech Communication and Theatre," Report of the SCA/ATA Joint Task Force on Teacher Preparation (Washington, D.C.: American Theatre Association, in cooperation with, Falls Church, Va.: Speech Communication Association, 1978).

[7]Joseph R. Jenkins and R. Barker Bausell, "How Teachers View the Effective Teacher: Student Learning is Not the Top Criterion," Phi Delta Kappan, 55:8 (April, 1974), pp. 572-573.

[8]T.L. Good, R. Coop, M. Dembo, J. Denton, and P. Limbacher, "How Teachers View Accountability," Phi Delta Kappan, 56:5 (January, 1975), pp. 367-368.